

2015 Summer Reading Guide for Rising 8th Graders

Dear Rising 8th Graders,

I am looking forward to starting 8th grade with you in September 2015! Below is your Summer Reading Guide. All assignments are due on the first day of classes in September.

- Assignment 1: Read at least one of the books listed (your choice of fiction or non fiction). You are encouraged to read as many as you can!
- Assignment 2: Write a narrative, describing your reading experience. Include a paragraph on each of the following:
 1. Why did choose this book?
 2. What did you expect to happen (or to learn) as you began reading? Why?
 3. What confused or surprised you as you continued reading? Why? (If nothing surprised you, explain why the book was so predictable.)
 4. Upon finishing the book, what message or lesson do you think the writer was trying to teach readers?
 5. Overall, what is your opinion of the book? Why?
- Assignment 3: After you have finished reading your chosen book(s), **complete a creative project** from the attached list of options.
- Assignment 4: Read one historical fiction book on the Trujillo era in the Dominican Republic—*Before We Were Free* OR *In The Time of the Butterflies*, both by Julia Alvarez—which will be used in an interdisciplinary study with Spanish class. **Answer each question in at least one complete paragraph.**
 1. What challenges did the main character(s) face in their lives?
 2. How did the characters respond to the challenges they faced?
 3. What did you learn about this time period in Dominican Republic by reading this book?

Happy Summer & Happy Reading!

Ariel

—FICTION—

THE REVOLUTION OF EVELYN SERRANO

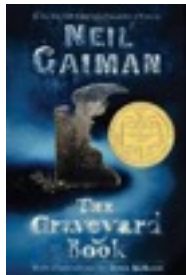
By Sonia Manzano



There are two secrets Evelyn Serrano is keeping from her Mami and Papi: her true feelings about growing up in her Spanish Harlem neighborhood, and her attitude about Abuela, her sassy grandmother who's come from Puerto Rico to live with them. Then, like an urgent ticking clock, events erupt that change everything. The Young Lords, a Puerto Rican activist group, dump garbage in the street and set it on fire, igniting a powerful protest. When Abuela steps in to take charge, Evelyn is thrust into the action. Tempers flare, loyalties are tested. Through it all, Evelyn learns important truths about her Latino heritage and the history makers who shaped a nation.

THE GRAVEYARD BOOK

By Neil Gaiman



It takes a graveyard to raise a child. Nobody Owens, known as Bod, is a normal boy. He would be *completely* normal if he didn't live in a graveyard, being raised by ghosts, with a guardian who belongs to neither the world of the living nor the dead. There are adventures in the graveyard for a boy—an ancient Indigo Man, a gateway to the abandoned city of ghouls, the strange and terrible Sleer. But if Bod leaves the graveyard, he will be in danger from the man Jack—who has already killed Bod's family.

BRONX MASQUERADE

By Nikki Grimes



When Wesley Boone writes a poem for his high school English class and reads it aloud, poetry-slam-style, he kicks off a revolution. Soon his classmates are clamoring to have weekly poetry sessions. One by one, eighteen students take on the risky challenge of self-revelation. Award-winning author Nikki Grimes captures the voices of eighteen teenagers through the poetry they share and the stories they tell, and exposes what lies beneath the skin, behind the eyes, beyond the masquerade.

RASH

By Pete Hautman



It's late in the twenty-first century, and the United Safer States of America (USSA) has become a nation obsessed with safety. For Bo Marsten, a teenager who grew up in the USSA, it's all good. He knows the harsh laws were created to protect the people. But when Bo's temper flares out of control and he's sentenced to three years of manual labor, he's not so down with the law anymore. Bo's forced to live and work in a factory in the Canadian tundra. The warden running the place is totally out of his mind, and cares little for his inmates' safety. Bo will have to decide what's worse: a society that locks people up for road rage, or a prison where the wrong move could make you polar bear food.

SAME SUN HERE

By Silas House and Neela Vaswani



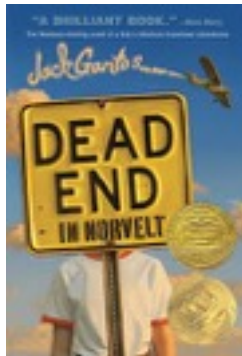
Meena and River have a lot in common: fathers forced to work away from home to make ends meet, grandmothers who mean the world to them, and faithful dogs. But Meena is an Indian immigrant girl living in New York City's Chinatown, while River is a Kentucky coal miner's son. As Meena's family studies for citizenship exams and River's town faces devastating mountaintop removal, this unlikely pair become pen pals, sharing thoughts and, as their camaraderie deepens, discovering common ground in their disparate experiences.



MY NAME IS NOT EASY

By Debby Dahl Edwardson

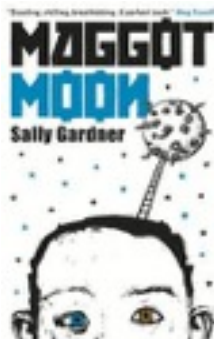
My name is not easy. My name is hard like ocean ice grinding the shore... Luke knows his Iñupiaq name is full of sounds white people can't say. So he leaves it behind when he and his brothers are sent to boarding school hundreds of miles away from their Arctic village. At Sacred Heart School, students—Eskimo, Indian, White—line up on different sides of the cafeteria like there's some kind of war going on. Here, speaking Iñupiaq—or any native language—is forbidden. And Father Mullen, whose fury is like a force of nature, is ready to slap down those who disobey. Luke struggles to survive at Sacred Heart. But he's not the only one. There's smart-aleck Amiq, a daring leader— if he doesn't self-destruct; Chickie, blond and freckled, a different kind of outsider; and small, quiet Junior, noticing everything and writing it all down. They each have their own story to tell.



DEAD END IN NORVELT

By Jack Gantos

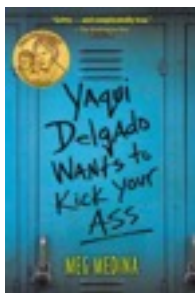
Melding the entirely true and the wildly fictional, *Dead End in Norvelt* is a novel about an incredible two months for a kid named Jack Gantos, whose plans for vacation excitement are shot down when he is "grounded for life" by his feuding parents, and whose nose spews bad blood at every little shock he gets. But plenty of excitement (and shocks) are coming Jack's way once his mom loans him out to help a fiesty old neighbor with a most unusual chore—typewriting obituaries filled with stories about the people who founded his utopian town. As one obituary leads to another, Jack is launched on a strange adventure involving molten wax, Eleanor Roosevelt, twisted promises, a homemade airplane, Girl Scout cookies, a man on a trike, a dancing plague, voices from the past, Hells Angels . . . and possibly murder.



MAGGOT MOON

By Sally Gardner

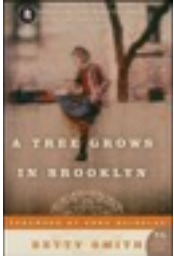
In Sally Gardner's stunning novel, set in a ruthless regime, an unlikely teenager risks all to expose the truth about a heralded moon landing. What if the football hadn't gone over the wall. On the other side of the wall there is a dark secret. And the devil. And the Moon Man. And the Motherland doesn't want anyone to know. But Standish Treadwell — who has different-colored eyes, who can't read, can't write, Standish Treadwell isn't bright — sees things differently than the rest of the "train-track thinkers." So when Standish and his only friend and neighbor, Hector, make their way to the other side of the wall, they see what the Motherland has been hiding. And it's big...



YAQUI DELGADO WANTS TO KICK YOUR ASS

By Meg Medina

One morning before school, some girl tells Piddy Sanchez that Yaqui Delgado hates her and wants to kick her ass. Piddy doesn't even know who Yaqui is, never mind what she's done to piss her off. Word is that Yaqui thinks Piddy is stuck-up, shakes her stuff when she walks, and isn't Latin enough with her white skin, good grades, and no accent. And Yaqui isn't kidding around, so Piddy better watch her back. At first Piddy is more concerned with trying to find out more about the father she's never met and how to balance honors courses with her weekend job at the neighborhood hair salon. But as the harassment escalates, avoiding Yaqui and her gang starts to take over Piddy's life. Is there any way for Piddy to survive without closing herself off or running away?



A TREE GROWS IN BROOKLYN

By Betty Smith

The beloved American classic about a young girl's coming-of-age at the turn of the century, Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is a poignant and moving tale filled with compassion and cruelty, laughter and heartache, crowded with life and people and incident. The story of young, sensitive, and idealistic Francie Nolan and her bittersweet formative years in the slums of Williamsburg has enchanted and inspired millions of readers for more than sixty years.



WHEN I WAS THE GREATEST

By Jason Reynolds

Ali's got enough going on, between school and boxing and helping out at home. His best friend Noodles, though. Now there's a dude looking for trouble—and, somehow, it's always Ali around to pick up the pieces. But, hey, a guy's gotta look out for his boys, right? Besides, it's all small potatoes; it's not like anyone's getting hurt. And then there's Needles. Needles is Noodles' brother. He's got a syndrome, and gets these ticks and blurts out the wildest, craziest things. It's cool, though: everyone on their street knows he doesn't mean anything by it. Yeah, it's cool...until Ali and Noodles and Needles find themselves somewhere they never expected to be...

ELEANOR AND PARK

By Rainbow Rowell

Eleanor, 15, is the new girl at school and bullied because she's overweight and dresses in a flamboyant manner. Park is a half-Korean boy who has lived in Omaha, Nebraska, all his life but still feels like an outsider. This is a story of first love, which very slowly builds from the first day Eleanor sits next to Park on the school bus. First they ignore each other, and then they slowly become friends through their love of comic books and 1980s alternative music. Park is the only good thing in Eleanor's life. Her home life is a miserable exercise in trying to stay out of her abusive stepfather's way, and finding new ways to wear the same clothes repeatedly since there is no money for anything extra. Park adores everything about Eleanor, and she finds refuge at his house after school with his understanding parents. Things finally explode at Eleanor's house and Eleanor and Park's relationship is truly tested.



FAR FAR AWAY

By Tom McNeal

Jeremy Johnson Johnson hears voices. Or, specifically, one voice: the ghost of Jacob Grimm, one half of The Brothers Grimm. Jacob watches over Jeremy, protecting him from an unknown dark evil whispered about in the space between this world and the next. But Jacob can't protect Jeremy from everything. When coltish, copper-haired Ginger Boultinghouse takes a bite of a cake so delicious it's rumored to be bewitched, she falls in love with the first person she sees: Jeremy. In any other place, this would be a turn for the better for Jeremy, but not in Never Better, where the Finder of Occasions—whose identity and evil intentions nobody knows—is watching and waiting, waiting and watching...

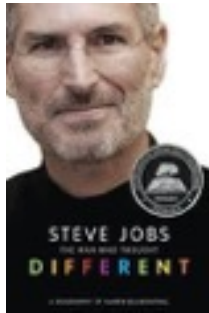


THE RED BLAZER GIRLS: The Ring of Rocamadour

By Michael D. Beil

It all began with The Scream. And ended with . . . well, if we told you that, it wouldn't be a mystery! But in between The Scream and The Very Surprising Ending, three friends find themselves on a scavenger hunt set up for a girl they never met, in search of a legendary ring reputed to grant wishes. Are these sleuths in school uniforms modern-day equivalents of Nancy, Harriet, or Scooby? Not really, they're just three nice girls who decide to help out a weird lady, and end up hiding under tables, tackling word puzzles and geometry equations, and searching rather moldy storage rooms for "the stuff that dreams are made of" (that's from an old detective movie).

NON FICTION:



STEVE JOBS: The Man Who Thought Different

By Karen Blumenthal

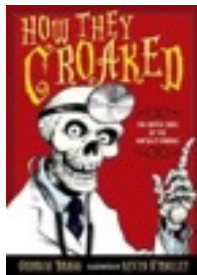
Steve Jobs was given up for adoption at birth, dropped out of college after one semester, and at the age of twenty, created Apple in his parents' garage with his friend Steve Wozniack. Then came the core and hallmark of his genius--his exacting moderation for perfection, his counterculture life approach, and his level of taste and style that pushed all boundaries. A devoted husband, father, and Buddhist, he battled cancer for over a decade, became the ultimate CEO, and made the world want every product he touched.



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE BARBIE: A Doll's History and Her Impact on the U.S.

By Tanya Lee Stone

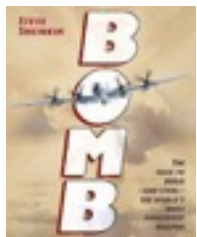
During her unparalleled fifty-year history, Barbie has been the doll that some people love-and some people love to hate. There's no question she's influenced generations, but how? Tanya Lee Stone takes an unbiased look at how Barbie became the icon that she is, and at the impact that she's had on our culture (and vice versa). Featuring passionate anecdotes and memories from a range of girls and women, a foreword by Meg Cabot, and original color photographs, this book explores the Barbie phenomenon in a brand-new light.



HOW THEY CROAKED: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous

By Georgia Bragg

Over the course of history men and women have lived and died. In fact, getting sick and dying can be a big, ugly mess-especially before the modern medical care that we all enjoy today. *How They Croaked* relays all the gory details of how nineteen world figures gave up the ghost.



BOMBI!:

The Race to Build--and Steal--the World's Most Dangerous Weapon

By Steve Sheinkin

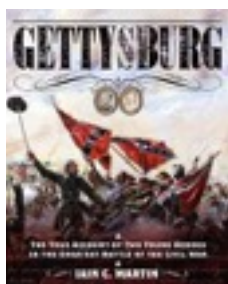
In December of 1938, a chemist in a German laboratory made a shocking discovery: When placed next to radioactive material, a Uranium atom split in two. That simple discovery launched a scientific race that spanned 3 continents. This is the story of the plotting, the risk-taking, the deceit, and genius that created the world's most formidable weapon. This is the story of the atomic bomb.

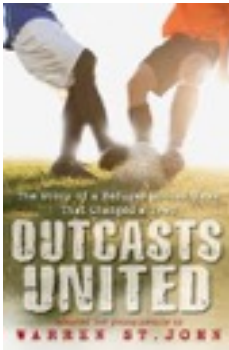
GETTYSBURG:

The True Account of Two Young Heroes in the Greatest Battle of Civil War

By Iain C. Martin

In the summer of 1863, General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia advanced into Pennsylvania in a daring offensive to win the Civil War in a single campaign. They met the Union Army at a quiet crossroads town called Gettysburg, and engaged in the greatest battle ever fought on American soil. Three days of combat ended on July 3 with Pickett's Charge, a heroic assault by nine of Lee's brigades against the Union defenses on Cemetery Ridge. At the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery that November, Lincoln used the occasion to deliver his Gettysburg Address, a short, two-minute speech that became the most famous in American history.



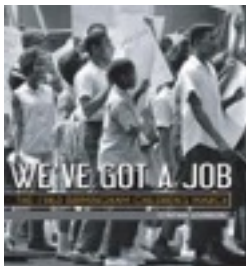


OUTCASTS UNITED

The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town

By Warren St. John

This is a complex and inspirational story about the Fugees, a youth soccer team made up of diverse refugees from around the world, and their formidable female coach, Luma Mufleh. Clarkston, Georgia, was a typical southern town until it became a refugee resettlement center. The author explores how the community changed with the influx of refugees and how the dedication of Luma Mufleh and the entire Fugees soccer team inspired an entire community.



WE'VE GOT A JOB

The 1963 Birmingham Children's March

By Cynthia Levinson

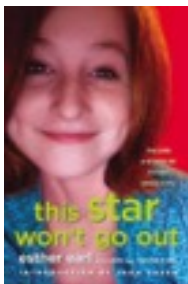
We've Got a Job tells the little-known story of the 4,000 black elementary, middle, and high school students who voluntarily went to jail in Birmingham, Alabama, between May 2 and May 11, 1963. Fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi's and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s precept to fill the jails, they succeeded where adults had failed in desegregating one of the most racially violent cities in America. Focusing on four of the original participants who have participated in extensive interviews, *We've Got a Job* recounts the astonishing events before, during, and after the Children's March.



THE NAZI HUNTERS: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazi

By Neal Bascomb

In 1945, at the end of World War II, Adolf Eichmann, the head of operations for the Nazis' Final Solution, walked into the mountains of Germany and vanished from view. Sixteen years later, an elite team of spies captured him at a bus stop in Argentina and smuggled him to Israel, resulting in one of the century's most important trials -- one that cemented the Holocaust in the public imagination.



THIS STAR WON'T GO OUT:

The Life and Words of Esther Grace Earl

By Esther Earl

In full color and illustrated with art and photographs, this is a collection of the journals, fiction, letters, and sketches of the late Esther Grace Earl, who passed away in 2010 at the age of 16. Essays by family and friends help to tell Esther's story along with an introduction by award-winning author John Green who dedicated his #1 bestselling novel *The Fault in Our Stars* to her.



8th Grade Summer Reading Project Choices (Assignment 3)

Fiction Book Project Options:

- i. Collage: Create a collage from magazine and newspaper images and words that reflects the major characters and plot events from your book. Your collage must be accompanied by a 1 page explanation of the images you included.
- ii. Alternate Ending: Extend your book's ending by tagging on an extra chapter! Or, if you found the ending disappointing, rewrite it the way you think should have happened. Your new chapter must be at least 1.5 pages.
- iii. Letter: Write a letter to one of the characters in the book. You can give advice about the character's conflict, praise for what the character has done, or support for what the character needs. This letter must be at least 1 page.
- vi. Reflection: Complete each of the following six sentence stems with a 1 paragraph response for each statement. **This book made me:** 1) realize that... 2) decide that... 3) wonder about... 4) connect to... 5) feel that... and 6) hope that...
- viii. Childhood Invention: Create a back-story of your protagonist's childhood in a 1 page paper. If your main character is an adult, try to figure out what s/he would have been like as a child. Make the connection between choices your protagonist made in the book and what his/her childhood was like.
- ix. Talk Show Interview: Design a fake Q&A (question and answer) between your character and a talk show host. Make the talk show host ask some difficult questions, and have your character answer honestly!
- x. Original Art: Develop and create your own original art project based on your novel. Color, photography, and/or computer graphics may be used. You must include a 1 page written explanation of your project, why you chose to represent this plot event or character, and its relationship to the novel.

(—> turn over for non fiction project choices)

Non-Fiction Book Project Choices:

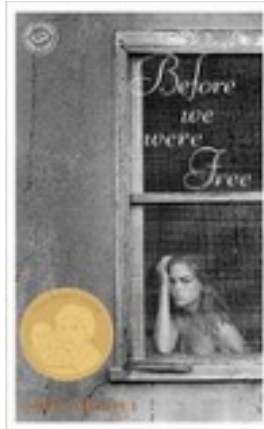
Collage: Create a collage from magazine and newspaper images and words that reflects the major concepts and events from your book. Your collage must be accompanied by a 1 page explanation of the images you included.

Reflection: Complete each of the following six sentence stems with a 1 paragraph response for each statement. **This book made me:** 1) realize that... 2) decide that... 3) wonder about... 4) connect to... 5) feel that... and 6) hope that...

Talk Show Interview: Pretend you are an expert on the topic of this book OR a person in the book. Design a fake Q&A (question and answer) between you and a talk show host on this topic. Make the talk show host ask some difficult questions, and provide good answers!

Teacher: Create a project that teaches others about the topic of your book.

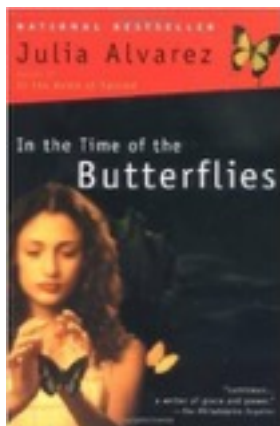
Historical FICTION BOOKS for Assignment 4: (Available through school library)



***Before We Were Free* by Julia Alvarez (192 pages)**

Anita de la Torre never questioned her freedom living in the Dominican Republic. But by her 12th birthday in 1960, most of her relatives have emigrated to the United States, her Tío Toni has disappeared without a trace, and the government's secret police terrorize her remaining family because of their suspected opposition of el Trujillo's dictatorship.

Using the strength and courage of her family, Anita must overcome her fears and fly to freedom, leaving all that she once knew behind.



***In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez (352 pages)**

In the Time of the Butterflies is a historical novel, written by Julia Alvarez, relating chronicling the Mirabal sisters during the time of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. In this extraordinary novel, the voices of all four sisters—Minerva, Patria, María Teresa, and the survivor, Dedé—speak across the decades to tell their own stories, from hair ribbons and secret crushes to gunrunning and prison torture, and to describe the everyday horrors of life under Trujillo's rule.

